

Westway and Imperium Expansion Projects

Draft Environmental Impact Statements



Vehicle Traffic and Safety Fact Sheet

The proposed projects would receive crude oil¹ transported by rail on the Puget Sound & Pacific (PS&P) rail line. The rail line crosses multiple roads and highways along this route from Centralia to the project sites at the Port of Grays Harbor. The increase in train traffic could affect vehicle traffic and safety, and the proposed projects would also increase vehicle traffic to the project sites.

What vehicle traffic and safety impacts were analyzed?

The studies analyzed in detail how the proposed projects would affect vehicle traffic and safety in the Hoquiam and Aberdeen area and along the PS&P rail line from Centralia to the project sites. Impacts include the potential for increased vehicle delays and congestion, and the potential for more frequent vehicle accidents along the PS&P rail line. The studies looked at impacts along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) rail line in general.

How were the impacts analyzed?

The studies describe current vehicle traffic around the project sites at intersections with the PS&P rail line. They consider the impacts from operation of the proposed facilities, and transportation by rail. Finally, the studies include actions that can mitigate or offset the potential impacts.

The impacts from construction and operation of the project sites were evaluated by studying existing and projected vehicle traffic. The studies looked at whether vehicles would be affected by increases in vehicle and train traffic from the projects. The studies looked at vehicle delay times and used a rating system to illustrate vehicle delay at intersections.

Along the PS&P rail line, the studies analyzed how increased rail traffic would affect vehicle traffic. The length of the longest train, 120 cars, was used for the calculations. The studies looked at projected traffic conditions in 2017 and 2037, showing examples of traffic during the start of operations and at full build-out of the proposed projects. The studies looked at:

- Delays for rush hour traffic
- Average length of vehicle delay in a day
- Blocked access for emergency services
- Vehicle accident rates at rail crossings
- Vehicle queuing at rail crossings and the impact to nearby intersections

How would the proposed projects affect vehicle traffic?

Construction and Operations

During construction, there would be new additional vehicles traveling to and from the project sites to transport construction workers, equipment, and materials for the proposed projects. These trips would be a small increase in daily traffic in the area, and would not likely affect vehicle delay or safety. Construction of each project is anticipated to last up to 22 months.

Operation of the proposed projects would also add vehicle trips to and from the project sites. These trips would be a small increase in daily traffic, and would not likely affect vehicle delay or safety.

Rail Traffic

The studies found several intersections in Centralia and Aberdeen that currently have long vehicle delays. The studies found that even without building the proposed projects, there would be long delays in Centralia, the Olympic Gateway Plaza area, and in the Port of Grays Harbor area.

The increase in rail traffic to and from the proposed facilities could block PS&P rail line crossings more frequently and for longer times than they do currently. The additional rail traffic could cause increased vehicle delays and congestion, including delays to emergency vehicles, at PS&P rail line crossings, and could spread delay to other intersections.

The studies found the most significant delays would happen in the Aberdeen and Hoquiam area. The intersections along the rail line between Aberdeen and Centralia experience less vehicle traffic, and would be less likely to have significant delays.

¹Imperium is also proposing to handle and store additional bulk liquids: ethanol, naphtha, gasoline, vacuum gas oil, jet fuel, no. 2 fuel oil, no. 6 fuel oil, kerosene, renewable jet fuel, renewable diesel, used cooking oil, and animal fat.

Estimated Time Vehicles Would Wait at PS&P Crossings in 24-Hour Period (Total amount of time in 2017)

Location	2017 Vehicle Delay without the Projects	2017 Vehicle Delay with the Projects
Between Centralia and Aberdeen	7 -17 minutes per day	11 - 29 minutes per day (For Westway) 13 to 36 minutes per day (For Imperium)
Olympic Gateway Plaza area	50 to 71 minutes per day	88 to 115 minutes per day
Port of Grays Harbor area	15 to 42 minutes per day	42 to 90 minutes per day (For Westway) 77 to 139 minutes per day (For Imperium)

A project train arriving at an intersection during rush hour traffic would result in the longest wait times. The studies also analyzed the total amount of time in a day that vehicles would have to wait for a train to cross.

The studies found that eastbound trains blocking the Olympic Gateway Plaza crossings, and trains being separated and moved from Poynor Yard would cause the most substantial increases in vehicle delay. Between East Aberdeen and the project sites, there would be more frequent and longer wait times. For example, trains currently block crossings in the Olympic Gateway Plaza area for approximately 35 minutes about 4 times per week. With the projects, this time would increase to approximately 45 minutes and could happen approximately 4 more times per week for Westway, and 7 more times per week for Imperium. In the Port area, trains currently block the Industrial Road crossing adjacent to the project sites for up to 13 minutes. With the projects, this would increase up to 22 minutes for Westway approximately 13 times per week, and 77 minutes for Imperium approximately 7 times per week.

Emergency Vehicles

The same delays to vehicle traffic would also affect emergency vehicles, like fire trucks and ambulances. The longest delays would occur in Centralia and Aberdeen. In Centralia however, emergency response providers are located on both sides of the rail line, so emergency vehicles have access from both sides. The Olympic Gateway Plaza in Aberdeen would have longer delays at intersections. There are paved access areas where fire trucks and ambulances can enter and exit the shopping area for emergencies.

Vehicle Safety

Increased rail traffic could increase how often vehicle accidents could happen along the PS&P rail line. Based on current traffic patterns, the risk of accidents would generally remain low, but with increased train traffic, the chance of accidents would increase. The East Aberdeen Mobility Project, which plans improvements at the Olympic Gateway Plaza area, could improve both vehicle delays and safety at crossings in this area.

What can Westway and Imperium do to reduce impacts on vehicle traffic?

The studies identify the following mitigation measures to reduce impacts on vehicle traffic:

- Work with the Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, the Port of Grays Harbor, and PS&P rail line to address vehicle delays or tell drivers about possible delays near Poynor Yard and at Olympic Gateway Plaza. The City of Hoquiam, the City of Aberdeen, and the Port of Grays Harbor will approve proposed measures for the areas where they are responsible for vehicle safety. The proposed changes will evaluate impacts on potentially affected low-income and minority populations.
- Provide advance notification to emergency responders of incoming trains or unplanned stops.
- Provide permanent signs at public crossings with information on how drivers can report accidents, malfunctioning warning devices, stalled vehicles, or other dangerous conditions.

The detailed list of measures is presented in Section 3.16, *Vehicle Traffic and Safety*, of the Draft EISs.

Would the proposed projects cause any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts?

Implementation of the mitigation measures, plans, and infrastructure improvements described previously could reduce impacts on vehicle traffic, but would not eliminate them. The proposed projects could have significant and unavoidable adverse impacts on vehicle delays from trains blocking crossings in the Olympic Gateway Plaza and Port of Grays Harbor areas of Aberdeen.

Where is more information available?

Within the Draft EISs, Section 3.16, *Vehicle Traffic and Safety*, has detailed information on current conditions, analysis and findings for the impacts of rail traffic on the PS&P line on vehicle traffic. The following sections of Chapter 3 also include detailed information and analyses relevant to traffic: Section 3.15, *Rail Traffic*, and Section 3.17, *Vessel Traffic*.

There are additional fact sheets discussing *Rail Traffic* and *Vessel Traffic*. There is also a fact sheet with information on risks of crude oil spills, *Crude Oil Environmental Health and Safety*.

Visit www.ecy.wa.gov/GraysHarbor for more information on the proposed projects.